

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the text after the heading “SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION” on pages 11-17 of the specification with the following:

-- A social network system and method performed by a social network system accessible over a data network with a plurality of data input devices connectable to said data network, said social network system including at least one host computer and a database of entity data records each relating to a corresponding user entity and containing one or more entity attributes including at least one identifying characteristic of said corresponding user entity, said method providing a given user entity with a virtual, unique, private, personal, social network (hereinafter ‘social network’) formed from connections between contacts, said contacts being other user entities connected directly or indirectly to said first user entity; said method including:

- communicating an invitation from a first user entity to one or more other user entities selected by said first user entity for inclusion in the first user entity’s social network as a contact;
- recording, in said database, each user entity accepting said invitation as being a direct contact directly connected to the first user entity by a first degree of separation;
- determining that for:
 - any second user entity directly connected to the first user entity and

- any third user entity directly connected to the second user entity but not directly connected to the first user entity,

the first and third user entities are determined as being indirect contacts, indirectly connected to each other with a second degree of separation;

- repeating the above steps for a given user entity having a corresponding entity data record in said database, wherein said given user entity is equivalent to said first user entity in said repeated steps to create, for each said given user entity, a corresponding individual, unique, personal, virtual social network, thereby collectively forming a plurality of social networks on said social network system, inter-connected by mutually connected contacts; and
- providing a given user entity with searchable access to at least part of the entity data records stored in said database;
- providing a given user entity with at least partial control of privacy of their individual, unique, personal, virtual social network with respect to a user entity seeking access to the given user entity's data record by permitting the given user entity to specify:
 - a connection factor between the given user entity and said seeking user entity and/or
 - one or more entity attributes of said seeking user entity,

required to allow the seeking user entity access to said given user entity's data record;

- permitting a given user entity to take a role of provider or participant in a predetermined activity and/or application via said data network, wherein
 - a provider is a user entity providing an item or service to at least one other user entity; and
 - a participant is a user entity utilising said provider's item or service. --

Please replace the ABSTRACT with the following paragraph:

-- A method of forming unique, private, personal, virtual social networks on a social network system that includes a database storing data relating to corresponding user entities. The method includes: a first user entity sending an invitation to a second user entity, recording in the database the second user entity as a direct contact of the first user entity and determining that third user entities, directly connected to the second user entity, are indirect contacts. A unique, personal, social network formed from direct and indirect contacts is thereby created for each user entity. Each user entity is able to control privacy of its data with respect to other user entities depending on the connection factor to that other entity and/or that other entity's attributes. Each user entity is able to take the role of provider or participant in applications where the provider provides an item or service to the participant. --